

Based on Colossians 1:11-20

Last Sunday after Pentecost; Proper 29

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers-- all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:11-20

There was a book that my kids (and I) really loved called "How Full is Your Bucket?" (which is actually based on a book written for grownups). But the gist of the book is that contentment can be looked at as though it were a bucket that each of us carried around; the fuller it becomes the happier and more satisfied we are and similarly as it is emptied, the less happy we become. But the trick of it is that the way we fill our own buckets is by putting others first. When we do things to make others happy – the happier and more satisfied we become.

Really, it's just a retelling of the Golden Rule as told by Jesus (Matthew 7:12); ""In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.""

Similarly, there is a story called the allegory of the spoons. In it, heaven and hell are very similar, there is plenty of what everyone needs, but the only way to get the food and water is to use a very long spoon. In hell, each person tries to feed themselves and fails because the spoon is too long, but in heaven they feed one another, and everyone is satisfied.



The passage above is a tidy summary of the Good News. Jesus has come to show us what human life can be; He is the example we should follow. In his death we see fully the capacity for evil that is in the world, but in his resurrection, we see that it, ultimately, has no power over and against God's love.

The Good news for us, is that through taking up life as a follower of Jesus, we too are recipients of God's love and beneficiaries of the Holy Spirit's abiding within us.

God's desire to help us become fully the people we were created to be is the means by which God hopes to see the complete transformation of human culture so that we might live in something like the kingdom of God in the here and now. So whether we understand our mission as filling others buckets, feeding others with our long spoons, or by some other metaphor in all of these we are living Christ's command that we love one another with our whole selves.